

Message Text

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14

ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USMISSION GENEVA

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USNMR SHAPE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR,US

SUBJECT: PRAVDA, NOVOYE VREMYA ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS

REF: MOSCOW 3640

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1. SUMMARY. A PRAVDA SIGNED COMMENTARY ON MARCH 12 IS UNUSUALLY FRANK IN ITS TREATMENT OF AILMENTS NOW BESETTING THE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP, AND EQUALY OUTSPOKEN ABOUT THE ALLEGEDLY "TENDENTIOUS AND HOSTILE" TREATMENT GIVEN THE CPSU PARTY CONGRESS IN AMERICAN MEDIA. THE COMMENTARY SAYS THAT PRESENT ATTACKS ON DETENTE IN THE U.S. ARE "TO NO SMALL DEGREE" TIED TO THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, BUT NOTES THAT "FANTASTIC STORIES" SPREAD BY "INFLUENTIAL CIRCLES" ABOUT THE SOVIET MILITARY PROGRAM ARE AMONG THE MORE DIRECT CAUSES OF MISUNDERSTANDING. THE ARTICLE COMMENTS THAT PESSIMISM IS BECOMING WIDESPREAD AMONG SOME AMERICAN OFFICIALS ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR DETENTE, BUT RELIES AGAIN ON THE CONVICTION THAT "THE MAJORITY OF AMERICAN PEOPLE" SUPPORT THAT POLICY TO AVOID AN UNRELIEVEDLY DARK PICTURE. IN OTHER COMMENTARY ON THE U.S.- SOVIET RELATIONSHIP, NOVOYE VREMYA ECHOES THE TASS REBUTTAL MARCH 10 (REFTEL) OF THE IDEA THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO DROP "DETENTE" WILL HAVE ANY EFFECT ON AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

2. PRAVDA'S NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT KURDYUMOV MARCH 12 BOASTS THAT THE SCOPE OF AMERICAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CPSU CONGRESS IS A FURTHER INDICATION OF IMPORTANCE WITH WHICH THE USSR IS REGARDED IN THE U.S. KURDYUMOV MAKES CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS LESS THAN HAPPY WITH THE CONTENT OF THE COVERAGE, DESCRIBING IT AS "TURBID STREAM OF ANTI-SOVIET HYSTERIA", AND AS "TENDENTIOUS AND HOSTILE." THE PRESS, HE ASSERTS, USED THE TACTIC OF "SILENCE AND FALSIFICATION" IN ITS ATTEMPT TO HIDE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE. BUT HE CONTINUES THAT "AMERICAN BOURGEOIS PROPAGANDA" WAS NEVERTHELESS FORCED "THROUGH ITS TEETH" TO ADMIT THE OPTIMISTIC AND REALISTIC CHARACTER OF THE BREZHNEV SPEECH AND THE FACT THAT THE USSR NOW OUTPRODUCES THE USA IN SOME AREAS OF INDUSTRY.

3. KURDYUMOV SAYS THAT BROAD CIRCLES OF U.S. PUBLIC OPINION REACTED WITH SATISFACTION TO BREZHNEV'S STATED INTENTION TO CONTINUE A POLICY AIMED AT IMPROVING U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS
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AND AT ACHIEVING MILITARY DETENTE, "INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENT ON LIMITING STRATEGIC ARMS." KURDYUMOV USES AMERICAN PRESS QUOTES AND AN INTERVIEW WITH L.A. MAYOR TOM BRADLEY TO CONTENT THAT A SALT AGREEMENT AND DECREASES IN U.S. DEFENSE SPENDING WOULD BE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. HE QUOTES INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER PRESIDENT MACMENAMIN (PHON) AS AN EXAMPLE OF A CORPORATE LEADER ADVOCATING INCREASED TRADE WITH THE USSR, AND PAUL

MCCRACKEN AS SAYING THAT "ATTEMPTS TO DISTURB THE RATE OF GROWTH OF THE SOVIET ECONOMY THROUGH A REFUSAL TO COOPERATE WITH THAT NATION WILL NOT PRODUCE THE DESIRED RESULTS."

4. KURDYUMOV ASSERTS -- AS THE SOVIET PRESS NOW ALMOST UNFAILINGLY DOES IN ARTICLES ON U.S.- SOVIET RELATIONS -- THAT "THE MAJORITY OF AMERICAN PEOPLE WISH TO STRENGTHEN THE PROCESS OF DETENTE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO STATES. KURDYUMOV CONTINUES, HOWEVER, THAT "THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT OPPONENTS OF IMPROVEMENT IN U.S.- SOVIET RELATIONS HAVE BECOME ANY SCARCE." KURDYUMOV ADMITS THAT EVEN IN SOME OFFICIAL CIRCLES IN THE USA "PESSIMISTIC ASSESSMENTS OF THE FUTURE OF DETENTE HAVE BECOME WIDESPREAD." WITH THE SAME FRANKNESS KURDYUMOV ASSERTS THAT MANY MAJOR AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS ARE NOT SIMPLY ECHOING SUCH VIEWS BUT ARE USING THEM AS THE BASIS FOR THEIR ESTIMATES OF PROSPECTS FOR SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS. INFLUENTIAL CIRCLES, HE SAYS, ARE SPREADING FANTASTIC STORES ABOUT THE "GROWING SOVIET THREAT" AND THE SOVIET MILITARY PROGRAM "AS THOUGH IT CLEARLY EXCEEDED THAT OF THE AMERICANS."

5. KURDYUMOV SAYS THAT "TO NO SMALL DEGREE" THESE ATTACKS ON DETENTE ARE TIED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, AND QUOTES GEORGE KENNAN THAT THOSE USING U.S.- SOVIET RELATIONS FOR THEIR OWN CAMPAIGN ENDS "TAKE UPON THEMSELVES A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY."

6. NOVOYO VREMYA IN BRIEF SIGNED COMMENTARY MARCH 12 ECHOES THE TASS REBUTTAL (REFTEL OF THE IDEA THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO DROP "DETENTE" FROM HIS VOCABULARY WILL HAVE ANY SUBSTANTIAL EFFECT ON AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. THE ARTICLE SAYS THAT "OBSERVERS WHO CONSIDER THE QUESTION SOBERLY ARE NOT INCLINED TO DRAMATIZE SOMETHING WHICH WAS SAID DURING A TV LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTERVIEW IN THE HEAT OF AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN. THE DECISION TO DROP THE WORD DETENTE IS NOT A DECISION TO CHANGE THE POLICY." THE ARTICLE FURTHER MAKES CLEAR THAT THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE CLEARLY DENIED ANY CHANGES IN THE U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION.

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